

DAVID JOVE

A TRIBUTE

If you lived 5000 years you would still never meet anyone quite like David Jove. It wasn't only that he was one of a kind, but *what kind of one of a kind* he actually was still is being hotly debated by an intergalactic body of his peers.

What is well known by those who treasure meaning over matter, substance over surface, is that no artist, past or present, took this world apart and put it back together again more uniquely than David Jove, and people probably will still be trying to figure out how he did it for centuries to come.

Since he wound his watch to endless time, it's no surprise that when the Canadian-born filmmaker/composer/writer/artist/psychic investigator/web guru died September 26, 2004 of pancreatic cancer in Frazier Park, California, he left behind more unfinished business than a phalanx of forensic archeologists could decipher and catalog in a mummy's age.

In brief Earth time, Jove produced two albums of his own songs ("Sweeter Song" and "Into the Shrine"), the pioneering cable-TV music series "New Wave Theatre" (reissued as a two-volume set on Rhino Video), an released movie, "Stranger Than Love" starring Academy Award-winning actress Sally Kirkland, and a popular cult web destination, thewholetruth.com. At the time of his death, he was in preproduction on his master opus Middle East thriller, "The Nostradamus File."

But, by far, David Jove's greatest piece of work was himself. Jove, the individual, was far more interesting than anything he created. Some people are simply better known for *who* they are than for *what* they do, no matter what they do. That was never truer than in Jove's case. His personal journey was so distorted, so surreal, so roundabout, his lifestyle so alien to any tread-milling middle-class working stiff, that, in comparison, Jove's average day was more exciting than a 100 fake TV reality shows or, for that matter, any fiction he himself might cook up. No matter how hard he tried to work around it, he *was* the story and he couldn't escape it.

Of course, Jove was not his real name. His past was cloaked in unmentionable secrecy and his present masked in a mysterious façade he used to separate friend from foe. These walls within walls had a profound effect on how much of Jove anyone could get to know and how public he could really be, especially since there was an open arrest warrant waiting for him in Canada in his *real* name.

Still, even though he tried to live under the radar, he was a natural-born lightning rod who craved attention, his personality the utter opposite of shy: feral. As a result, David Jove couldn't hide in one of the biggest cities in the world if his life depended on it. He was going to be heard from, one way or another, so he elected to err on the side of caution, shunning the mainstream and choosing notoriety over fame. Ultimately, he was a riddle to the many who didn't know him well enough to understand his paranoia, where he was coming from, or the "why" to anything he did, because he resolutely refused to even acknowledge such questions.

As a result of his intolerances and bluntness, he had almost as many foes as friends. It was also clear that he was his own worst enemy, totally unwilling and unable to get out of his own way. Jove was a complex union of contradictions that left many to question his ethical standards (as in: did he have any), but his moral end-runs were also part of his bizarre charm.

Outside the lines, he was a gifted prankster, relentless adversary, messianic narcissist, tireless self-promoter, reckless risk-taker, arch provocateur, thankless taskmaster, savvy con, bumptious bully and, perhaps most significantly, brilliant failure. Ambitious as he was, Jove defined success differently than most. For him it meant hit and run, getting away with as much as possible before the smoke cleared, no matter how many people he pissed off.

Simply pushing the envelope was not enough; he had to blow it to smithereens and convert it to chicken feed for real live chickens. Building alliances for tomorrow, for a career, for the future, was never part of his agenda. He lived solely for the Big Bang, the long-shot-come-home, the exploding moment, the ultimate high, the skiing-Mt. Everest-thrill of a lifetime of doing things his way, the way he saw it in his head, no compromises, no prisoners.

No one polarized people like Jove. They either loved him like a brother for his counsel or hated him like the devil for trashing them—there was no gray area in the middle. And he could be as rude and cruel to those

who loved him as those who didn't; some who hated him probably had their reasons. Like weird emotional plumbing with the pipes crossed, he could be extremely cold or tearfully warm—and suddenly change temperatures without warning. He either inspired undying loyalty or lifelong enmity, but *everyone* remembered Jove, every one of the thousands of people he met in his lifetime. Because once met, you could never forget.

No doubt the charismatic Jove could have been a successful actor, filmmaker or recording artist, had he taken a straight path to any of the many things he did well. But he blew up that path and from then on never took a straight line when he could take a crooked angle. He spoke elliptically, taking wide swings around the universe before coming back to his original subject, a half hour, hours, days later. He spun off on more tangents, took more detours, entertained more diversions, made more phone calls in the middle of a conversation, got more sidetracked in the course of one sitting or one project, that it took years longer than necessary for him to finish anything he started.

Time—his time, your time, my time—meant nothing to him. Time—and his running lecture or reading of the day, whatever day—stopped only for breaks of libation and laughter. Wonderfully deep belly laughs that started in the brain and wouldn't stop no matter how hard you tried. David could make you laugh so hard you cried.

David Jove was a certified weapon of mass distraction, one of the most transcendently funny people ever, a sparkling phrasemaker, word bender and coiner, slick teller of jokes, master of the absurd, a fearless improviser with a boundless imagination. This was obviously one very dangerous person, dangerous to all with a fixed mind or who thought they knew it all or even thought they had a clue.

To keepers of the status quo, he was a dangerous observer, a Wizard of the Wake-up Call who saw through everything material, misguided and meaningless, and was able to articulate it with visionary clarity, spiritual certainty and an ultra-sophisticated twist of humor.

To make it more difficult for outsiders to crash his scene—and easier for him to crash theirs—he spoke his own language, a confusing-amusing, seemingly random blend of UFOlogy, Scientology, Crowleyisms, Kabala, I Ching, anagrams, street talk, and homegrown code he dubbed "21st century curbstone jargon."

Somehow, remarkably, the Great Assimilator patched it all together and kept expanding his scope of vision. At a time in history when much-needed voices of dissent had lost their tongues or been bought off, David's signal only grew stronger and reached further than ever, echoing in the mind of the lone seeker as well as the higher brain of the top thinkers of so-called civilization.

On a personal level, you could always count on David to offer thoughtful advice on whatever was bothering you. His was a sharply-tuned ear that seemed to know what you needed to hear when you needed to hear it, like that wise older brother you never had, and his steely strength was always a force to lean on when an uncaring world wasn't spinning your way and no one else would give you the time of day. It's called friendship by some.

Highly intelligent, street smart, acutely aware, incurably curious, an avid reader, pursuer of knowledge, brilliantly, spontaneously imaginative, constantly creative, charming and confrontational, as quick-witted as they come – that was all David. And stimulating company... a gifted conversationalist... life of the party. He could out-talk anybody in the room, meet any intellectual challenge, expose any dilettante, and return any verbal volley at the speed of sound with an encyclopedia of deft, disarming, self-crafted phrases, poems and lyrics.

Yet Jove was deadly serious about making the world a better place. Make no mistake: David Jove changed lives, mostly for the better, and saved more than a few with timely, objective, insightful, brotherly counsel on the nature of personal reality and his patented brand of live-affirming, crystallized truth you couldn't get anywhere else.

He demanded a lot from people, but he also gave a lot back. If you valued knowing *who you are and why you're here*, then what kind of a price-tag can you possibly put on finding out, like it or not? And no one ever had to ask him for the keys to the cage—he gave them away to anyone who dared to listen. Free.

We must face the fact that Jove was so far out—quite possibly the farthest-out person on the planet—that wherever he goes next will surely be more his speed, the speed of light. While he definitely maximized everything he did here, being stuck on Earth in this Age of Vulgarity only bogged him down, however enlightening he was for those around him. He longed to be free to roam the open range of black sky, to be with his own kind, the great aliens of the universe, and swap tales about their adopted worlds.

At the end, his body having absorbed all the abuse it could stomach, Jove's soul finally leaped aboard the astral plane streaking toward the bright Lights of Nowhere, leaving this world a duller place, and us far duller for it.

Certainly we are less conscious beings as a direct result of his passing. Now we are left behind to sleep with one eye open, slap our own faces and wake ourselves up, and find an answer fast to the first burning spiritual questions of the new millennium... before we forget to remember:

"If David Jove is no longer alive, then what are we?"

And, more importantly, what the hell are we going to do about it?!

*—Ed Ochs
October 1, 2004*